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## NOME'S ONLY DRESS SUIT.

It Was a Mascot for Everyone Except Its Owner.

In those first days of the inrush at Nome acquaintances of a day were reckoned as friendships. Men met men on the street, shook hands, bought drinks and were sworn allies for ever after.

After six months Tom Culver was regarded as one of the oldest and foremost citizens. He was 29 years old and had been there four months. Few knew whither he had come, or what he meant to do, but he had money, spent it like a true blue Klondiker, and, in spite of his tenderfoot ways, was beloved of men.

The struggle for quick eminence in a mining town is as feverish as the desire for sudden wealth. Nome was full of men who didn't know a shale sink from a true fissure. Not half of them were miners in the real sense, but they were there for business and meant to do it.

Politics is almost as good as mining if you get away right and can boss the diggings. There are restaurants in the Klondike that pay better than prize claims.

Caste is unknown. If you are a man you are a man. A woman is a transfigured creature, deified by memories and almost forgotten longings, apotheosized in proportion to her beauty, her youth, her virtue and her isolation.

Tom Culver met the Killian girl in the streets of Nome one day. She was young, fair, modest, intelligent. She seemed excessively beautiful. Thornton introduced them, and she invited him to her party.

Perhaps she looked approvingly upon his tall form and comely face. Thornton didn't, but they had sat elbow to elbow in a stud poker game at the Chilkat place, and were therefore friends.

The Killian house was just finished, and had in it eight rooms—a palace for those days in that place. Everybody was there who could claim the protection of the law.

Culver came at 9, and the festivities stopped to give the guests time to contemplate him. The company did not agree to pause for this contemplation. It was unavoidable, involuntary, purely emotional.

Tom Culver was in full dress!

To enhance the éclat of his appearance he wore a white chrysanthemum in his lapel. Neither dress suit nor chrysanthemum had ever been seen before in Nome.

A dress suit! A fresh flower!

Thornton, who was with Miss Killian when Culver came in, looked as if he would faint. The girl beamed upon him with an excess of radiance. His presence alone, in that array, would have made her party the "event of the season." She made much of him, favored him, danced more with him than with any one.

The men elected he must be a millionaire as well as a tenderfoot, and asked him to take a hand. The answer was that he preferred to dance with Miss Killian. Then they hated him.

When he put on his gray kid gloves to go home Miss Killian held his hand too long. Thornton was glowering at them from the window.

At 2 o'clock in the morning Culver still luminous in his dress suit

and chrysanthemum, broke the bank at the Chilkat Palace and went to bed. The next day he and his sartorial sensationalism of the night before were the talk of the town. The weekly newspaper gave him a half column and, with rare delicacy, predicted his wedding with Miss Killian. Gamblers agreed that the full dress game was the only way to buck the tiger. He went to see the girl, but she was less complacent, probably because he wore a sack suit and an overcoat.

"Where did you get that flower?" she asked.

"My mother sent it to me in cotton from the States," he said.

"The only one?"

"The only one from the only woman—but one," he whispered, but she was looking across the hall at Thornton.

That night the Chilkat dealer wore back most of his luck. The regulars said that he couldn't win in plain clothes. One of them offered to hire the suit.

"All right," he said. "I'm broke. I'll let you have it for \$25 an evening—\$50 for all day."

The gambler, who was superstitious, hired the suit and prospered. Culver staked that money and lost. He always lost after that except when he wore his evening dress.

But there was more money in hiring it out than in play. He got \$100 for lending it to an ambitious young politician who aspired to be chairman of the city convention.

The man was elected. Not a ball, not a party, not a show, not a shindig was "pulled off" in Nome that year but somebody wore Culver's dress suit. It was the only one. The first, the last, the winner.

Everybody who had tried it agreed that it was a mascot. Thornton hired it to visit Miss Killian, and Culver raised the price. It cost \$100 now to wear it for a day. The money went across the green cloth covers at the Chilkat.

He preferred not to lend it to Thornton at all. But most of his time was spent at the Chilkat, and dress suits looked de trop in a mixed gambling company. Meanwhile Miss Killian did not smile upon him. He had called, but was told that she was out. He watched the house from the corner, and presently he saw Thornton, in his evening garments, come whistling down the street and enter the Killian house.

Tom must have caught cold that night; but anyway he couldn't get out in the morning. He spent two days in dreamland, and when he woke up his doctor told him that he couldn't get well. The young fellow smiled, tiredly, and said: "All right! How soon?"

"Any minute, Tom," said the doctor, and all that day the man of medicine wrote letters back to the "only woman—but one." In the evening Thornton called—the first time—and, after inquiries, said he wanted to borrow the dress suit.

"I'm to be married, Culver," he explained.

"To Miss Killian?" asked Culver in a whisper.

"Yes, Culver. We expected to have you there, but as you can't go and I'd like to put up a swell form how about the dress suit?"

"You can't have it, Thornton."

"Why not? I'll give \$200. Three?"

"No, Thornton! You can't have it. I'll need it myself. You—see—I mean—to—be—buried in it!"

And he turned his face to the wall. But the odd part of it was that Busby, the undertaker, who buried poor Culver, loomed up at the funeral—in a dress suit.—Chicago Record Herald.